

Inclusion of Gujjar and Bakerwals in Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract

Inclusion of Gujjar and Bakerwals in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is a historical event as it has changed the size and shape of the state. Article 330,32,334 of the Indian constitution provide for the reservation of seats in parliament and state legislature for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in proportion to the percentage of their population in their respective state and union territories. Jammu and Kashmir state constitute Gujjar and Bakerwals as the third largest community after Muslims and Dogras.

Keywords: Inclusion, Gujjar, Bakerwals, Jammu and Kashmir

Introduction

India is a home to the largest concentration of tribal population in the world. According to census 1991 India constitutes of about 8% of the population of scheduled tribes except the Jammu and Kashmir where this census was not conducted. The tribal community of India have more illiterates as compared of literates. The Gujjar and Bakerwals as of transhumant nomadic and semi nomadic tribes of Jammu and Kashmir are with special majority of the tribal's of Jammu and Kashmir. After Kashmir Muslims and Dogras, Gujjar and Bakerwal considers as the third largest community of Jammu and Kashmir constitutes special importance. Socially this tribal community is faced with the problems of low educational levels, hygienically poor living conditions and poor quality of livestock. The Gujjar and Bakerwals in Jammu and Kashmir are socially, economically and politically marginalized. The positive step among Gujjar and Bakerwals is the declaration of scheduled tribe, is a long demand combined their position as a distinct ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups. It is believed that Gujjar and Bakerwal were basically Rajputs who are said to have migrated from Gujarat (via Rajasthan) and the Hazari district of North Western frontier providence of Punjab in the 5th and 6th century A.D due to occurrence of drought and settled in different areas of Jammu and Kashmir state where rearing of cattle facilities are available for them. Many of them were settled in green pastures of Siwaliks and the Himalayas. The Gujjar and Bakerwals of Jammu and Kashmir have no reliable record of their migration. According to R.P. Khatana, "they entered by one route or another to seek refuge, in these hills. At times of invasion and persecutions, the flow of refugees from the Punjab plains into the Kashmir hills increased" the premises is that the main reason of the inclusion of Gujjar and Bakerwals in Jammu and Kashmir is unrelenting drought, insufficient grazing facilities in their original lands, increase in their population, political or religious discrimination in the plains of Punjab.

Jammu and Kashmir state constitute Gujjar and Bakerwals as the third largest community after Muslims and Dogras. According to census 2001 Gujjar and Bakerwal constitutes 8.1 per cent of the total population. Instead of Kashmir, Jammu region is more concentrated by Gujjar and Bakerwal population. The districts which are highly concentrated by the Gujjars and Bakerwals are Poonch, Rajouri, Anantnag, Udhampur, Kupwara and Srinagar. The Poonch and Rajouri districts constitute 39.34 and 30.31 per cent of the Gujjar population are highly concentrated districts because of more pasture lands. The various cultural groups and tribes are historically settled in Jammu and Kashmir from the north-west, east and south. People from various races, groups, religions are included in the state of j & k is immigrants from the various parts of India. The Jammu and Kashmir constitute two numerically strong ethnic groups in the form of Muslims and Gujjar and Bakerwals. But there is no much information available about Gujjar and Bakerwals of the j & k state as compared to Muslims. Gujjar and Bakerwals are nomadic peasantry living on lofty mountain slopes near alpine pastures and in high altitude valleys.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is multi-lingual, multi-religious and multiethnic state. It is to be said that the Jammu and Kashmir state enjoys certain ethnic groups like Kashmir's, Dogras, Gujjars and bakerwals, baltis, Gaddis, Ladakhis. Dogras are mostly inhabited in Jammu region while Gujjar and Bakerwals are found in mountainous and khandi area of the state. Gujjar and Bakerwals is mostly goat and sheep rearing people migrated from Rajasthan and embraced Islam and included in the population of Jammu And Kashmir State. The early history of Gujjar and bakerwals is not clearly understood or expressed. There are several theories about their origin. According to one school of thought, before their arrival in the sub continent, they were the inhabitants of Georgia (Gurjia) a territory situated between the Black sea and the Caspian Sea. Due to continuous drought in Rajasthan and Gujarat during 6th and 7th centuries led to the out-migration of these people entered the pastures of the Siwaliks and the Sub-Himalayas along with their cattle.

Objectives of the study

To study the inclusion of Gujjar and Bakerwals of Jammu and Kashmir

To study the settlements of Gujjar and Bakerwal tribal of Jammu and Kashmir

To study the role of government schemes for the upliftment of Gujjar and Bakerwal

Methodology: This paper is mainly based on secondary data. No primary data has been collected as collection of primary data. For collection of secondary data, available literature in the form of Books, Newspapers, along with published and articles and research papers have been selected.

Factors responsible for settlement

Social Environmental Factors

During the Empire of Maharaja Bajayi Singh; the Gujjar and Bakerwal tribal's entered the territories of Jammu and Kashmir in about 1127-1154 A.D. Settled on the mountains of the state. Livings like a nomadic life are evidently, economically and educationally backward. As per the latest data available they comprise 25%-28% of the total population of the state. The Gujjar and Bakerwals do not have any permanent house, rearing of cattle is the basic source of livelihood. They like to live in the areas where green pastures and plenty of water for their cattle are available. These tribal's can communicate well in Punjabi and Kashmiri language Gojri. The folk songs of Gojri especially Baramha, Mayya, Sipayya, Dhol, Chan and Tajo are very popular among the other communications of the state. Early marriages and polygamy are very common in the life of Gujjar and Bakerwal. They earn their living with the dignity of labour. They are in fact the glory and pride of the state.

Physical Environmental Factors

The physical environmental factors which are a part and parcel of the human existence play an important role in the healthful life of the Gujjar-Bakerwals. As already we know that Gujjar and Bakerwals prefer to live on the hill tops away from environmental pollution and breathe the purest form of air. The availability of free polluted environment and pastures for cattle rearing includes the Gujjar and Bakerwals in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. They use maize, rice and wheat as their food. Rearing of cattle means have a surplus quantity of milk and used it in different forms as curd, butter, clarified butter, butter milk etc. the living conditions of Gujjar and Bakerwals are very specific.

Biological Environmental Factors

The livelihood of the Gujjar and Bakerwals is largely dependent upon cattle rearing moves from lower to upper areas of mountains according to climate conditions. They have their horses and mules used for transporting their luggage women folk, children and aged members of the family. The Gujjar and Bakerwals have their domestic dogs who faithfully watch their cattle. Owing to their constant associations with animals, the climate conditions on the hills and other living conditions becomes difficult for them to maintain themselves from Variety of skin ailments and allergic disorders.

These tribes use various types of medicinal plants for their day today nourishments. But sometimes using certain poisonous plants makes them harm and their cattle. Inclusions of Gujjar and Bakerwals in the high mountain ranges of Jammu And Kashmir State are almost set- apart from the outside world. The history brings out that these tribal's are not affected by infectious diseases spreads in the state of Jammu and Kashmir from time to time. The Gujjar and Bakerwals included in the state of J & k from very long time have taken increase in the population very rapidly living a very happy life according to their old customs and traditions under the Himalayan and Pir pinchal ranges. Without indulging in any sort of clash or conflict with their environment since centuries, these tribal's are enjoying a jubilant health status owing to their being most eco- friendly.

Gujjar and Bakerwals need sense of security

Gujjar and Bakerwals as the counter part of the population of Jammu and Kashmir state are economically weak and socially disadvantaged communities, chief minister of the state Mufti Mohd Syed said, that the government to create a separate tribal affairs ministry to ensure empowerment of weaker sections especially Gujjar and Bakerwal. For the upliftment of Gujjar and Bakerwals chief minister gave special focus upon the allotment of funds in departmental plans. With these funds the benefits trickle down the intended beneficiaries at the grassroots level. With the establishment of two girl's hostels at Udhampur and Kupwara, chief minister said education as the key to empowerment of Gujjar and Bakerwals. The government also announce enhancement of food stipend in hostels for school children from Rs 50 to Rs 100. Mehbooba mufti in her address said we are trying to best to instil a sense of security in the Gujjar and Bakerwals. She also stressed to develop them in health, power and education sectors. The inclusion of Gujjar and Bakerwal tribe in Jammu And Kashmir State has made its source of living as livestock, starting the livestock insurance policies and programmes by the government to increase the standard of living of the community. Ch. Lal Singh, minister for the health and medical education said, the community has faced problems and difficulties is need to uplift social and economic conditions so that

marginalization is far away from the community. Besides member parliament, Mehbooba Mufti, Minister for health and medical education, Abdual Haq khan, minister for rural development, minister for CA & PD and tribal affairs Ch. Zulfar, minister for Finance and culture, Dr. Haseeb A. Drabu, minister for social welfare and forest, Bali Baghat, minister for education, Naeem Akther and minister for PHE, I & FC, Sukhnandan Kumar and Vice chairman state Advisory Board for Gujjar and Bakerwals, Ch. Zafar Ali were present to give special focus upon the upliftment of the community.

Conclusion

Gujjar and Bakerwals are originated from the Central Asian Countries, how they entered India in different periods of the time. In Jammu and Kashmir their migration took place during the drought and famine periods in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Socially this tribal community is faced with the problems of low educational levels, hygienically poor living conditions and poor quality of livestock. The Gujjar and Bakerwals in Jammu and Kashmir are socially, economically and politically marginalized. The positive step among Gujjar and Bakerwals is the declaration of scheduled tribe, is a long demand combined their position as a distinct ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups.

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